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SIPDIS

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NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION WSSD; HARARE

11. Following are excerpts of editorials carried in the September 4 editions of the independent daily "The Daily News" and the government-controlled daily "The Herald" on Robert Mugabe's speech to the WSSD:

12. Under headline "As millions face starvation, Mugabe scolds Tony Blair," the "Daily News" (09/04) comments:

"Zimbabweans will have reacted differently to President Mugabe's emotional address to the WSSD in Johannesburg on Monday. Some will praise it for its blunt warning to the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to stop what Mugabe believes is his interference in Zimbabwean politics. . . Others will rank it as a rather unfortunate speech which did not address the nitty-gritty issue of the summit's agenda - sustainable development. They will regret Mugabe's preoccupation with Tony Blair to the exclusion of the number one subject among the people today - starvation. . . So, while it may be possible that there are those who feel the President's speech to the Earth Summit hit the right note, there may be others who feel strongly that by taking his brawl with Tony Blair to such a world forum, Mugabe did not enhance his international reputation one whit. Certainly, they would not feel that the speech would do much to help the six million people threatened with starvation. They would counsel against the confrontational stance of the government, while the country is in such dire need of food aid."

13. Under headline "President's speech should invigorate us" the government-controlled daily "The Herald" (09/04) comments:

"President Mugabe's speech at the WSSD on Monday has been hailed by most well-meaning people throughout the world for speaking on behalf of the poor. The thunderous applause he got during and after his address said it all. This was probably his finest moment in history as he hogged international limelight on all major television networks, newspapers, radio talk shows and news agency reports. In just 10 minutes he had devastated the entire Western coalition against Zimbabwe and given the Third World a new voice to speak with boldness against neo-colonialism being brought in the name of globalization and democracy. . . Although he did not insult anyone, British Prime Minister Tony Blair particularly felt the sting of his candid speech. . . What the speech has achieved more than anything else is the message that firstly, Zimbabwe is a truly free country and will die protecting its sovereignty. Secondly, the land reform program is here to stay. This is the message the world needed to hear. . . Zimbabweans should find new vigor and strength from the President's boldness and forthrightness to push on the land agenda and support this courage by making the agrarian reforms a success. . . ."

SULLIVAN